

# STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 49

14p

A detailed illustration of a futuristic space scene. A large, yellow and blue spaceship is shown in the upper left, appearing to be in a state of disrepair or crash-landing. In the foreground, three astronauts in blue and white suits are positioned on a reddish, rocky surface. One astronaut is standing prominently in the center, holding a long, futuristic weapon. Another astronaut is partially visible behind them, and a third is lying on the ground to the right. The background features a green, star-speckled sky and a large, reddish planet or moon on the left side.

# RIGEL EXPRESS




# STARBLAZE



LIEUTENANT STEVEN TERRY OF THE 1ST REGIMENT, SPACE TASK FORCE, RISKED HIS SHIP TO SAVE THE SURVIVORS OF A SPACE DISASTER. THE OPERATION WAS A SUCCESS, BUT A COURT OF INQUIRY HELD THAT THE RISK TO HIS SHIP HAD NOT BEEN JUSTIFIED. HE WAS TAKEN OFF ACTIVE SERVICE. IN HIS OFFICE HALF-WAY UP THE 100-STOREY EARTH SPACE COMMAND, STEVE WOULD HAVE GIVEN ANYTHING TO GET BACK INTO SPACE. COMMAND KNEW THIS. STEVE'S NAME WAS ON A SECRET LIST OF POTENTIAL LEADERS FOR SUICIDE MISSIONS AGAINST THE BRUTAL AND BARBARIC ASUR MEGATROOPS, WHO WERE HELL-BENT ON ELIMINATING EARTH'S INFLUENCE FROM THE GALAXY. THE ASUR HAD TO BE CONFRONTED AT THE STAR RIGEL, AND THE ONLY WAY TO GET THERE WAS BY THE RIGEL EXPRESS.

# RIGEL EXPRESS

IN EARTH COMMAND CENTRE THE SITUATION WAS BEING DISCUSSED.



THE ASUR HAVE ADVANCED RAPIDLY. A DELAYING ACTION WOULD GIVE OUR RE-ARMAMENT PROGRAMME A CHANCE.

THE OUTER SPACE OBSERVATORY, MILLS 3, IS RIGHT IN THE PATH OF THE ALIEN ADVANCE. WE COULD HOLD THEM UP THERE, BUT IT WOULD BE A SUICIDE MISSION.



LIEUTENANT STEVEN TERRY WAS IN HIS PODCAR HEADING HOME IN THE RUSH HOUR TRAFFIC.









STEVE LANDED ON THE ROOF OF THE COMMAND CENTRE.



STEVE WAS TOLD THE WHOLE STORY.

TERRY, THIS IS THE ONLY CHANCE  
YOU'LL EVER GET OF A COMBAT  
MISSION.

I REALISE THAT.  
WHEN DO I LEAVE?



YOUR SPACECREW WILL BE A NAVIGATOR,  
VIDOP AND GUNNER—PLUS A COMPANY  
OF 100 SPACE MARINES. YOU'LL TRAVEL  
BY STELLAR TRAIN. YOU WILL FIGHT TO  
THE LAST MAN—WE NEED ALL THE TIME WE  
CAN GET.





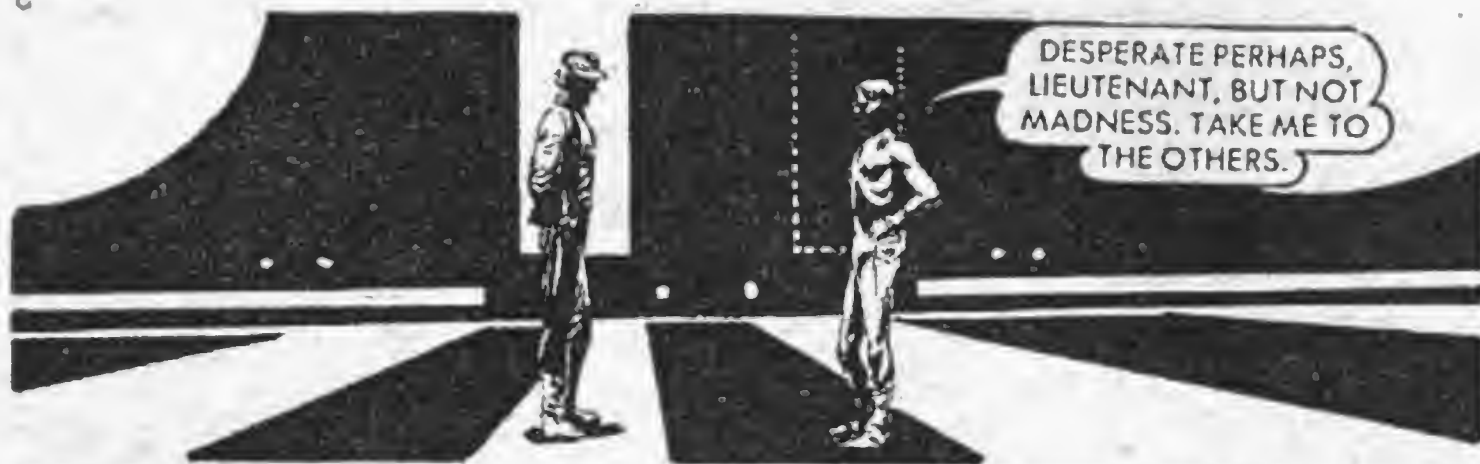
ALL THE CREW AND MARINES COME FROM MILITARY PRISONS. THEY ARE HARD CASES . . . DIFFICULT TO CONTROL.

THEY HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT THEIR LIVES . . . THEY'LL LISTEN TO ANYONE WHO IS TRYING TO KEEP THEM ALIVE.

STEVE WAS TRANSPORTED TO EARTH CENTRAL THE GIGANTIC MILITARY AND COMMERCIAL SPACEPORT.

HENRY, SIR—NAVIGATOR. THEY'VE COMMANDEERED THE RIGEL EXPRESS FOR THIS MADNESS.

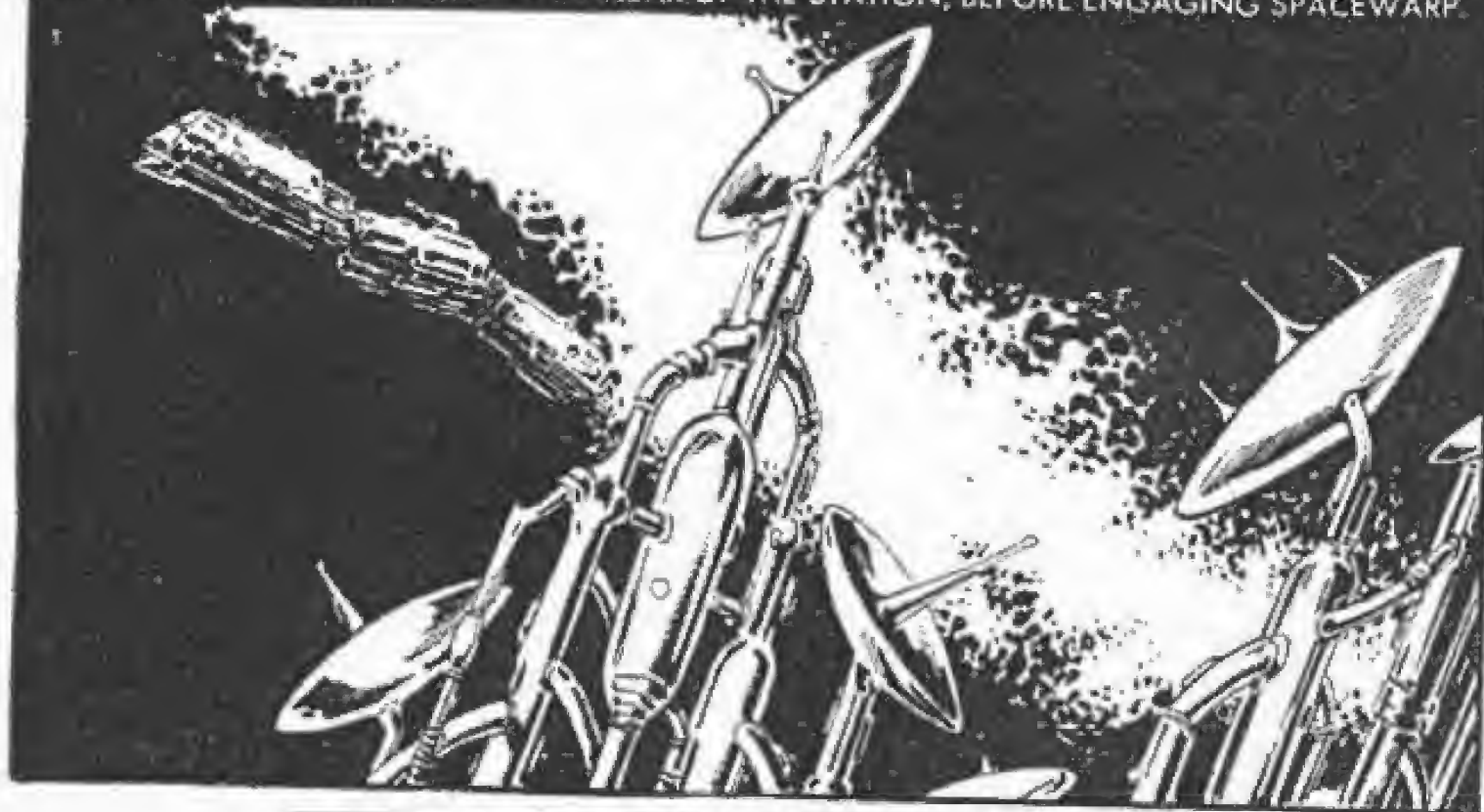








THE RIGEL EXPRESS DRIFTED SLOWLY CLEAR OF THE STATION, BEFORE ENGAGING SPACEWARP.



RIGHT, SLOW START—ACTIVATE  
MAIN DRIVE, COURSE GREEN 020 ...  
BLUE 72 DEGREES.



THE EXPRESS ACCELERATED TOWARD THE DISTANT STAR, RIGEL.




AS THE CRAFT SHOOK ITS WAY ALONG THE STARLANE—

YOU'RE MY SECOND IN COMMAND, HENRY, SO I HAVE TO RELY ON YOU, YET YOU HAVE A SHOCKING RECORD FOR INSUBORDINATION.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME—EVERY TIME I GOT INTO TROUBLE, IT WAS WITH AN OFFICER WHO TALKED ABOUT ACCEPTABLE CASUALTIES, WHO DIDN'T CARE ABOUT THE INFANTRY IN THE SUB ZERO DESERTS OF PLUTO, OR THE BOILING GASES OF SATURN. YOU BENT RULES TO RESCUE PEOPLE . . . I'LL OBEY YOUR ORDERS.

EVEN AS STEVE AND HENRY TALKED, ASUR MEGATROOPERS WATCHED FROM COVER.



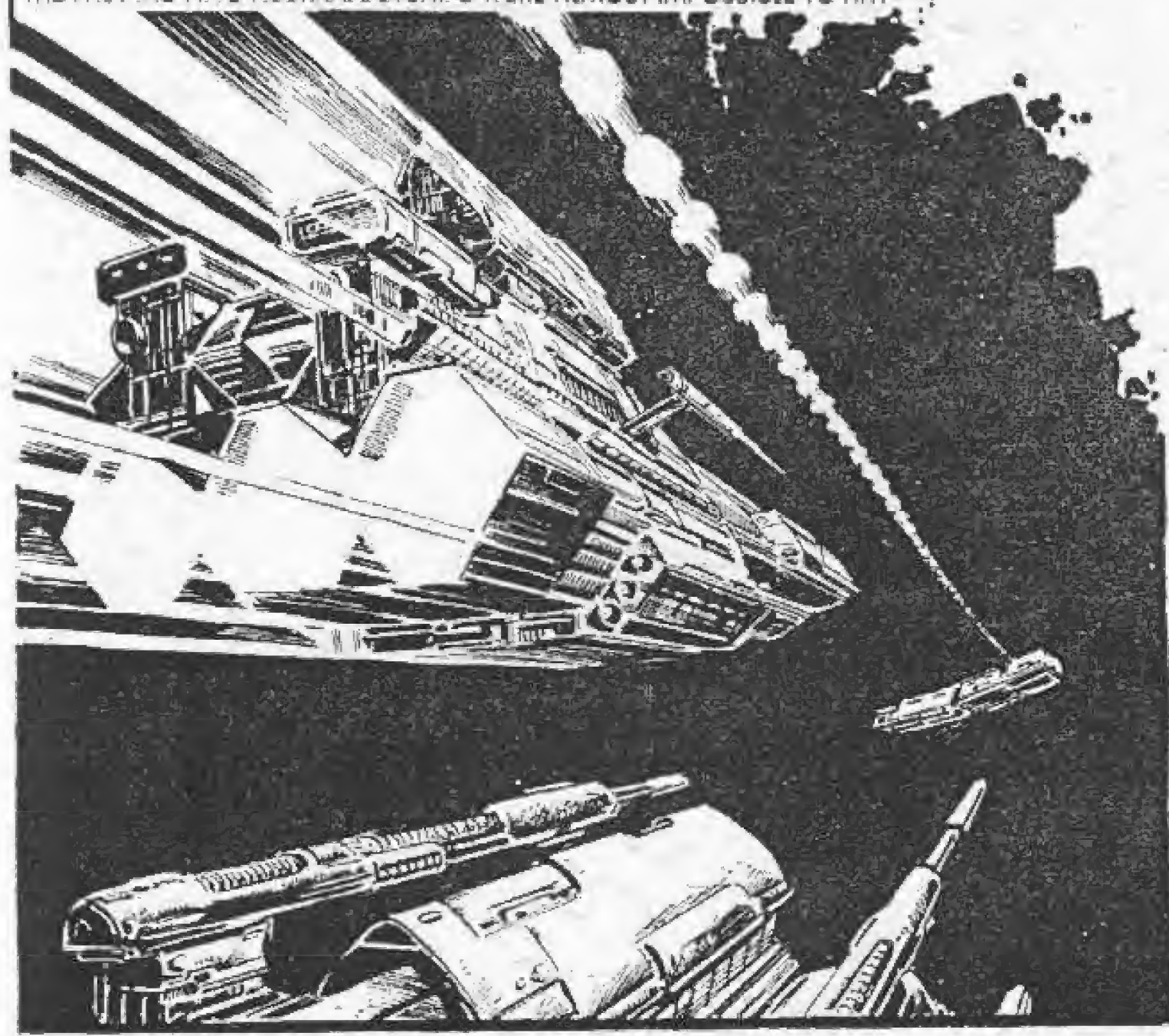
A TERRAN STELLAR TRAIN! THEY  
MUST BE MAD TO EXPOSE  
PASSENGERS IN OUR PATH!

SENSORS INDICATE  
IT'S ARMED—AND CARRYING TROOPS.





THE FAST-MOVING ASUR SCOUTSHIPS WERE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO HIT.







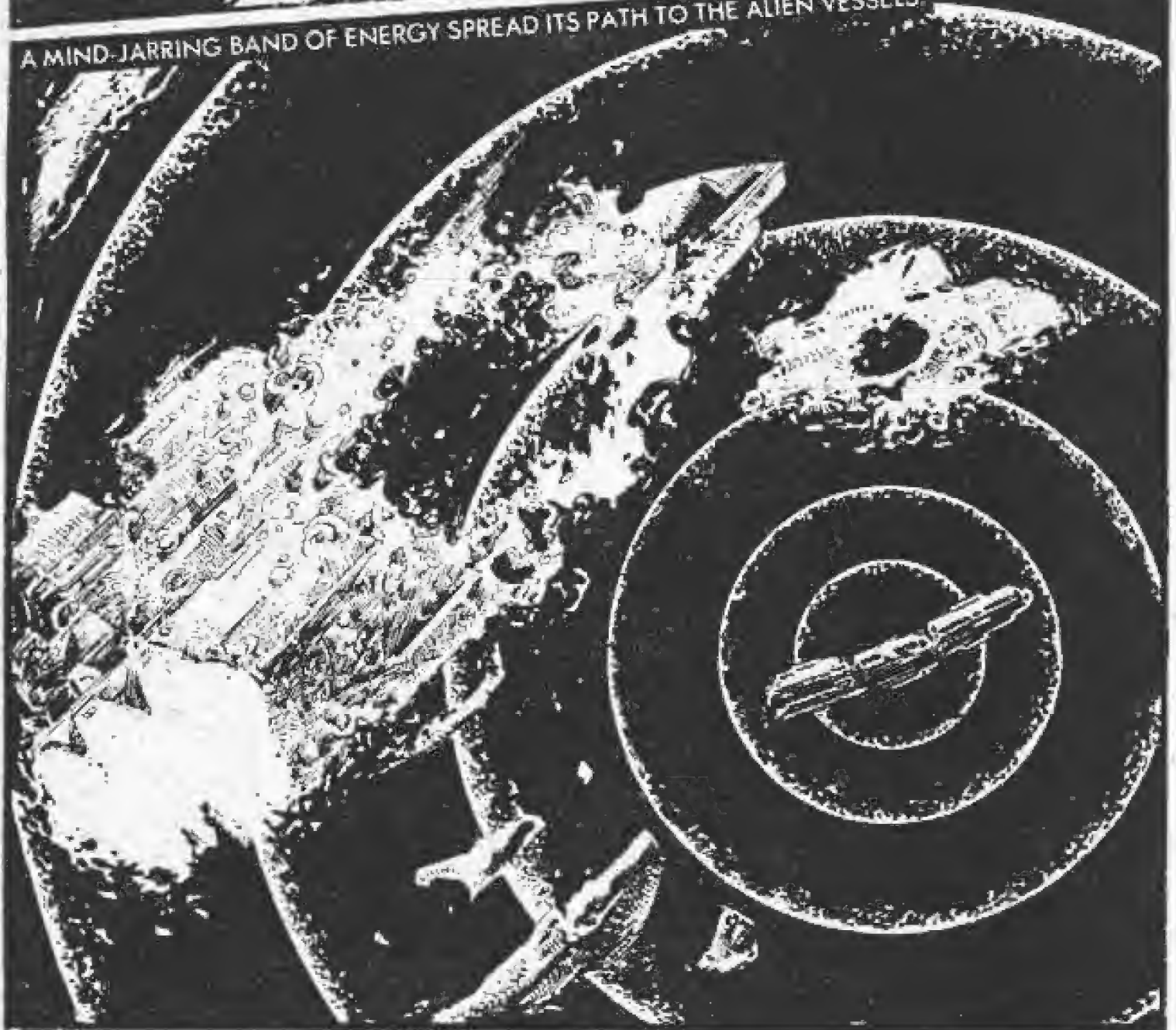


REAR COACH AND THE PILOT COACH  
BURNING.

STEVE'S FAKE SMOKE DREW THE ALIENS WITHIN FIRING RANGE.

THEY'VE BOUGHT IT!  
DESTABILISER—ACTIVATE.

A MIND-JARRING BAND OF ENERGY SPREAD ITS PATH TO THE ALIEN VESSELS.

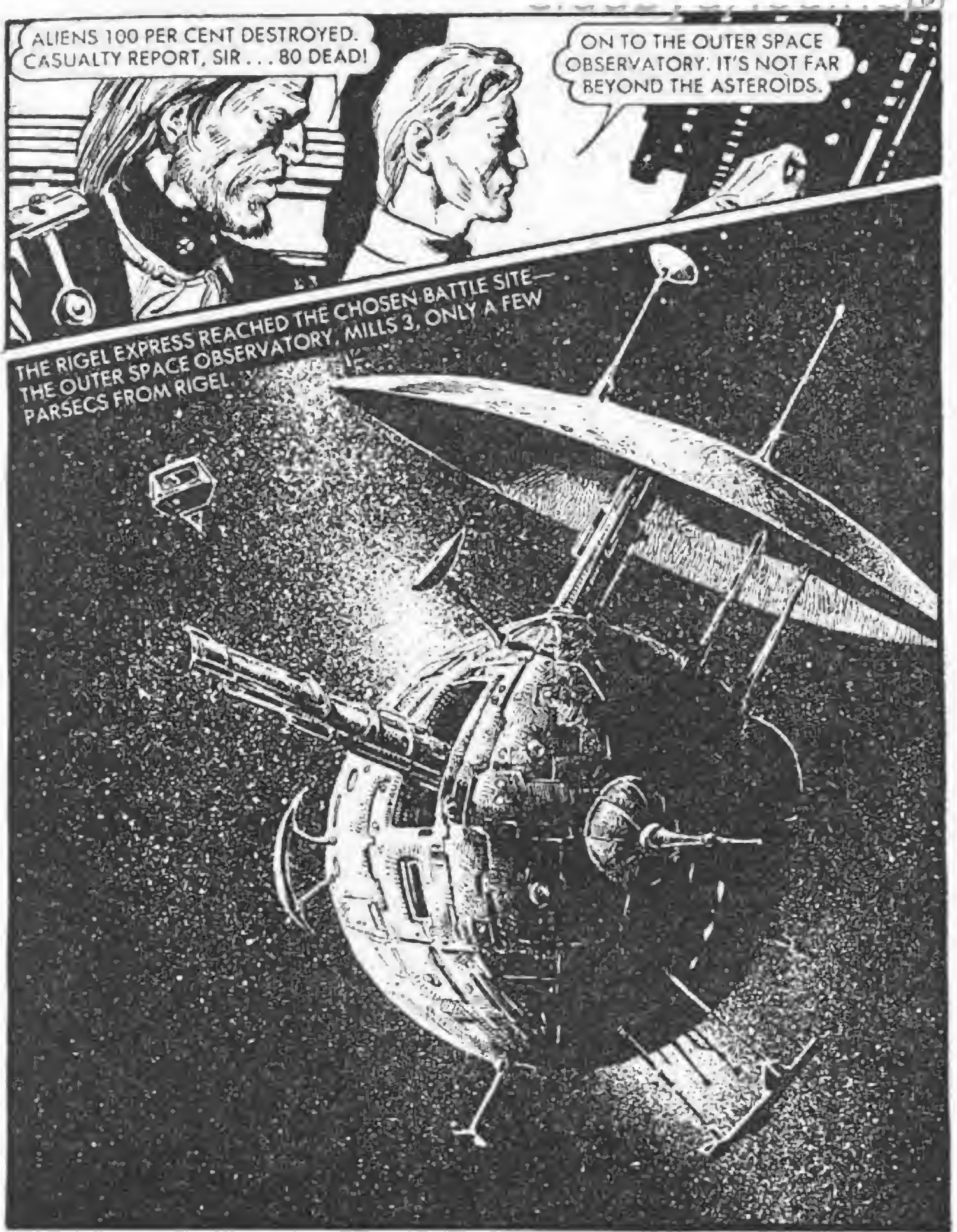




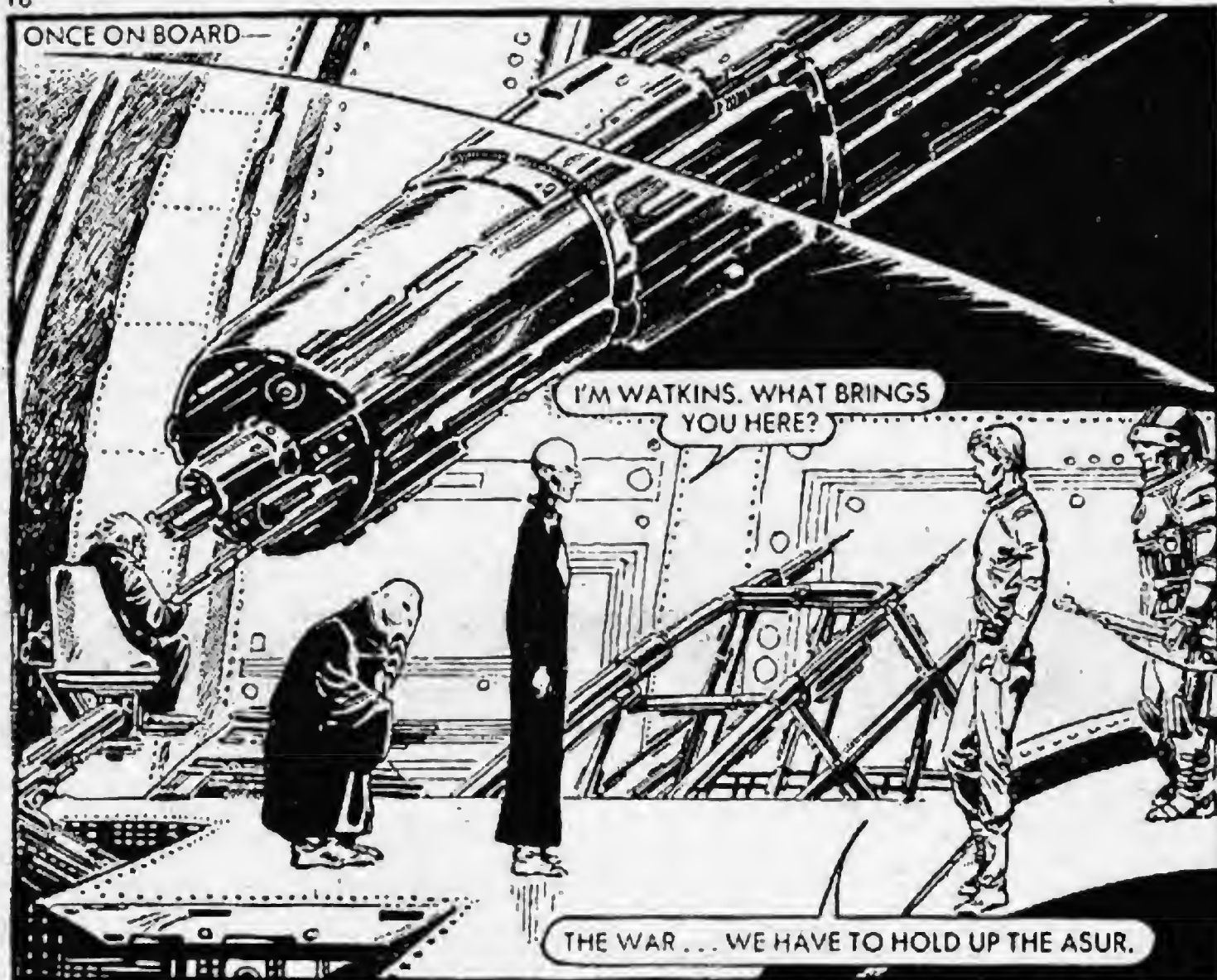
ALIENS 100 PER CENT DESTROYED.  
CASUALTY REPORT, SIR . . . 80 DEAD!

ON TO THE OUTER SPACE  
OBSERVATORY. IT'S NOT FAR  
BEYOND THE ASTEROIDS.

THE RIGEL EXPRESS REACHED THE CHOSEN BATTLE SITE—  
THE OUTER SPACE OBSERVATORY, MILLS 3, ONLY A FEW  
PARSECS FROM RIGEL.



ONCE ON BOARD—



THE WAR ... WE HAVE TO HOLD UP THE ASUR.



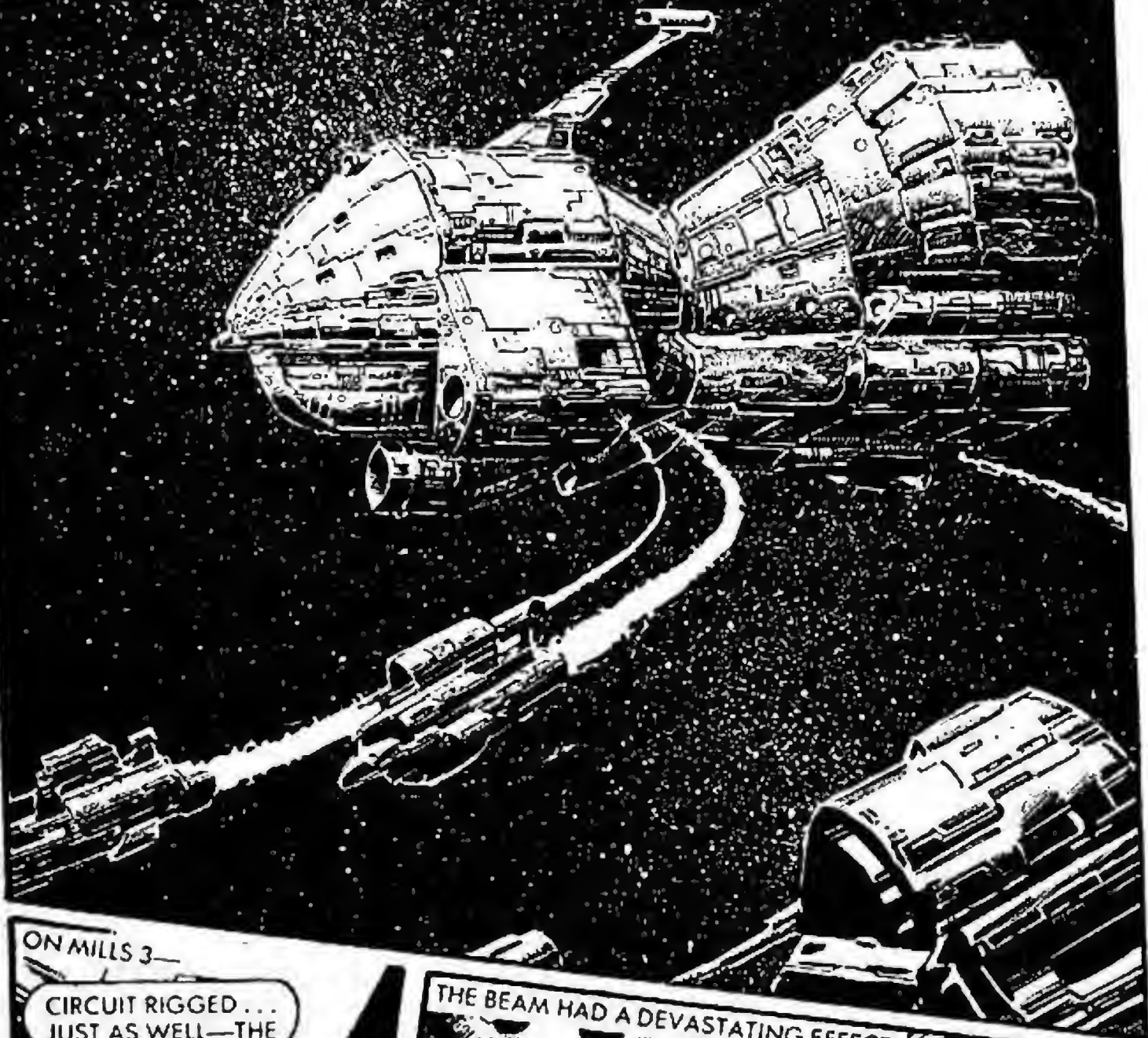
WE'LL NEED  
ALL YOUR HELP.



IF WE USE THIS TELESCOPE TO  
PRODUCE AN INTENSE BEAM OF LIGHT,  
WE CAN MAGNIFY THE DESTABILISER'S  
EFFECT.



AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF THEIR SPACECRAFT, THE ASUR MAIN SPACEFLEET MOVED TOWARDS THE OBSERVATORY.



ON MILLS 3—

CIRCUIT RIGGED...  
JUST AS WELL—THE  
ASUR HAVE SENT  
VISITORS.



THE BEAM HAD A DEVASTATING EFFECT.

IT WORKS AT SPEED OF LIGHT,  
AND FASTER THAN THEY CAN  
FIRE.




LOSING THREE SHIPS WON'T STOP THE ASUR.

THE ASUR FLEET TURNED ITS ATTENTION TO THE OBSERVATORY—WITH CATAclysmic effect.







WE DIDN'T DELAY THEM LONG.

THEY'VE DETACHED A SHIP TO CHECK  
US OUT. THAT'S ALL WE'RE WORTH—  
ONE LOUSY SHIP.

WE CAN'T DEFEND THIS  
OBSERVATORY—

OKAY, SO WE ATTACK!



ON BOARD THE ASUR VESSEL—

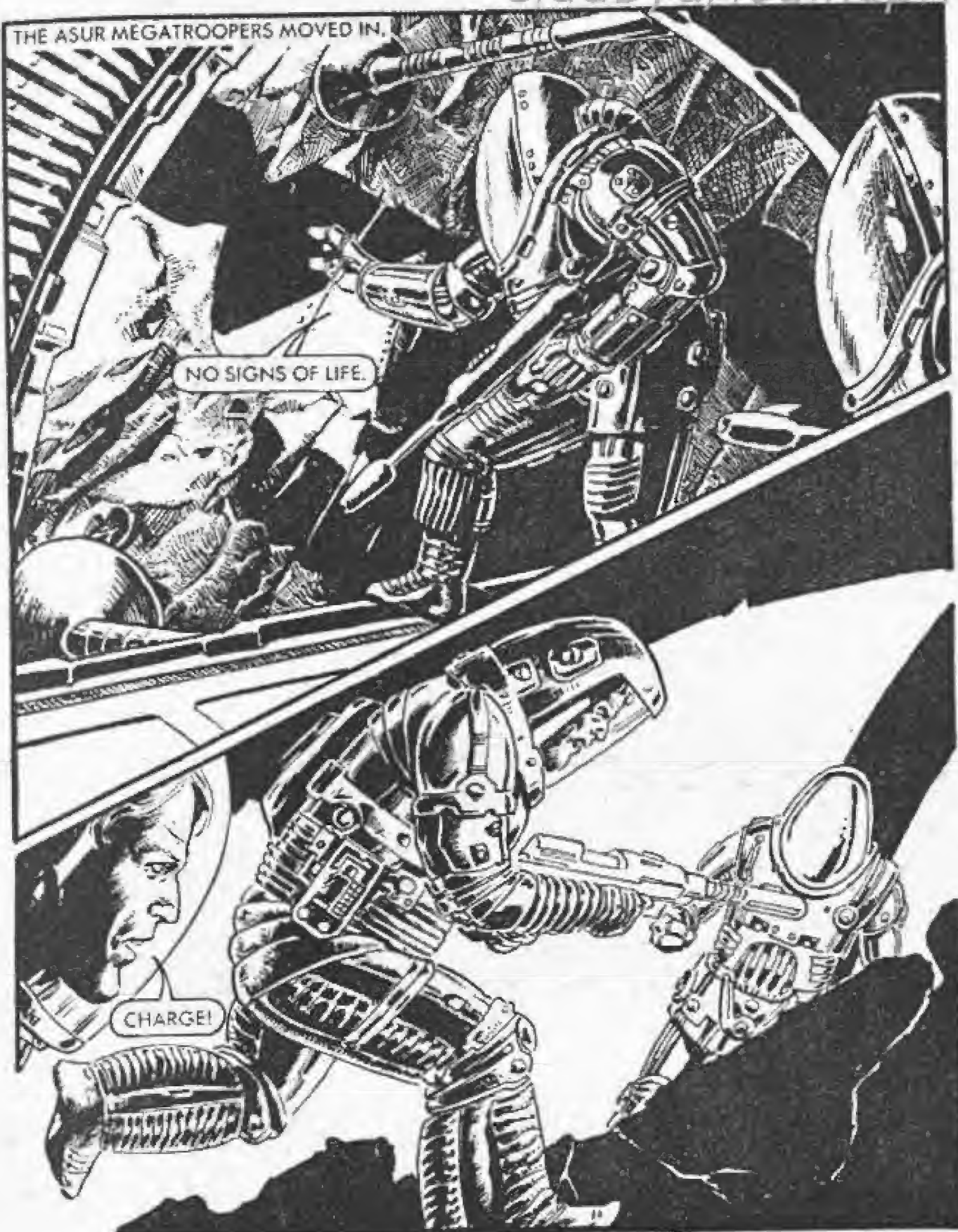


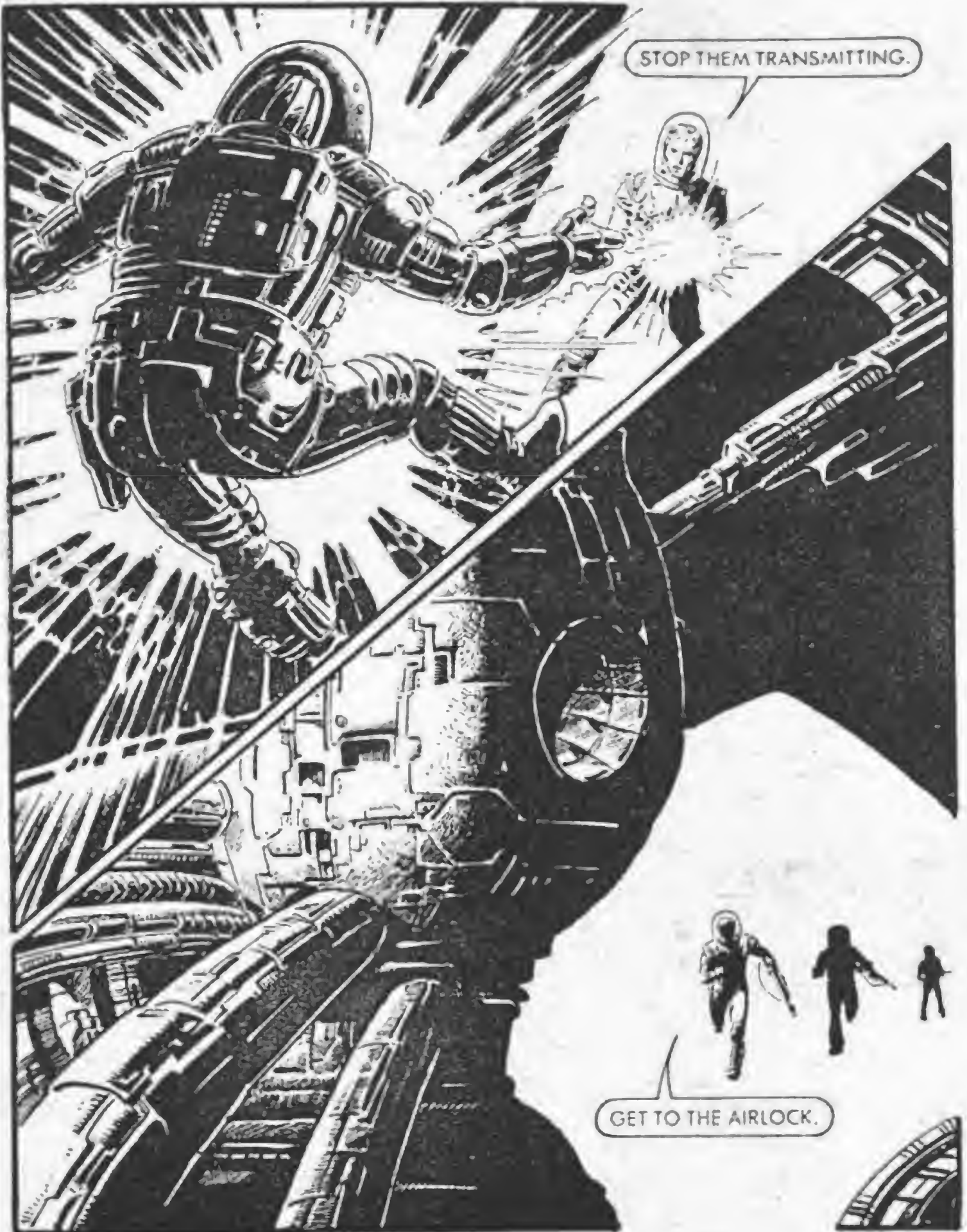


THE ASUR MEGATROOPERS MOVED IN.

NO SIGNS OF LIFE.

CHARGE!







THEY SWARMED ABOARD THE ASUR SHIP.



WE'VE GOT THEM...  
THE SHIP IS OURS.





30...

WE COULD GET CLOSE IN THIS ASUR SHIP,  
AND CAUSE A GREAT DEAL OF DAMAGE.

CLOSE ENOUGH TO USE THE  
DESTABILISER—IT CAN BE FIXED.

STEVE SET COURSE FOR ASUR WITH THE RIGEL EXPRESS CLAMPED  
IONICALLY TO THE SIDE. THEY SPED PAST THE ETHER-CONSUMING  
PARASITES OF DEEP SPACE.

IT TOOK SEVEN PERIODS TO REACH ASUR.

THIS IS WHERE IT GETS TOUGH—SIGNAL  
THE SENSOR STATION.

I'VE SENT A "DISABLED SHIP"  
MESSAGE, AND CONFIDENTIAL  
INFORMATION FOR COMMANDER  
ONLY.

ON BOARD THE RIGEL EXPRESS—



I'M IN CONTACT WITH AN ASUR SHIP, SIR.

REMEMBER, WE HAVE TO CAST OFF AND ACT FAST AND INDEPENDENTLY OF THE SKIPPER.

ON THE ASUR CRAFT —



OUR SHIP, VOLTOR, HAS RETURNED WITH CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION. MY COMPLIMENTS TO THE CAPTAIN, TELL HIM I'M COMING ABOARD.


AN AIR PASSAGE WAS LINKED UP AND THE ADMIRAL WALKED OVER.







ON THE PLANET OF ASUR—



BISMALLAH! ALL SHIPS TO  
SURROUND THE VOLTOR—  
SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED.



NOW WE GO STRAIGHT  
FOR IMPERIAL CITY!

IF ONLY WE CAN GET NEAR ENOUGH,  
THE DESTABILISER IS THE BEST  
WEAPON.




ASUR GROUND TROOPS RACED TO PROTECT THE CITY.







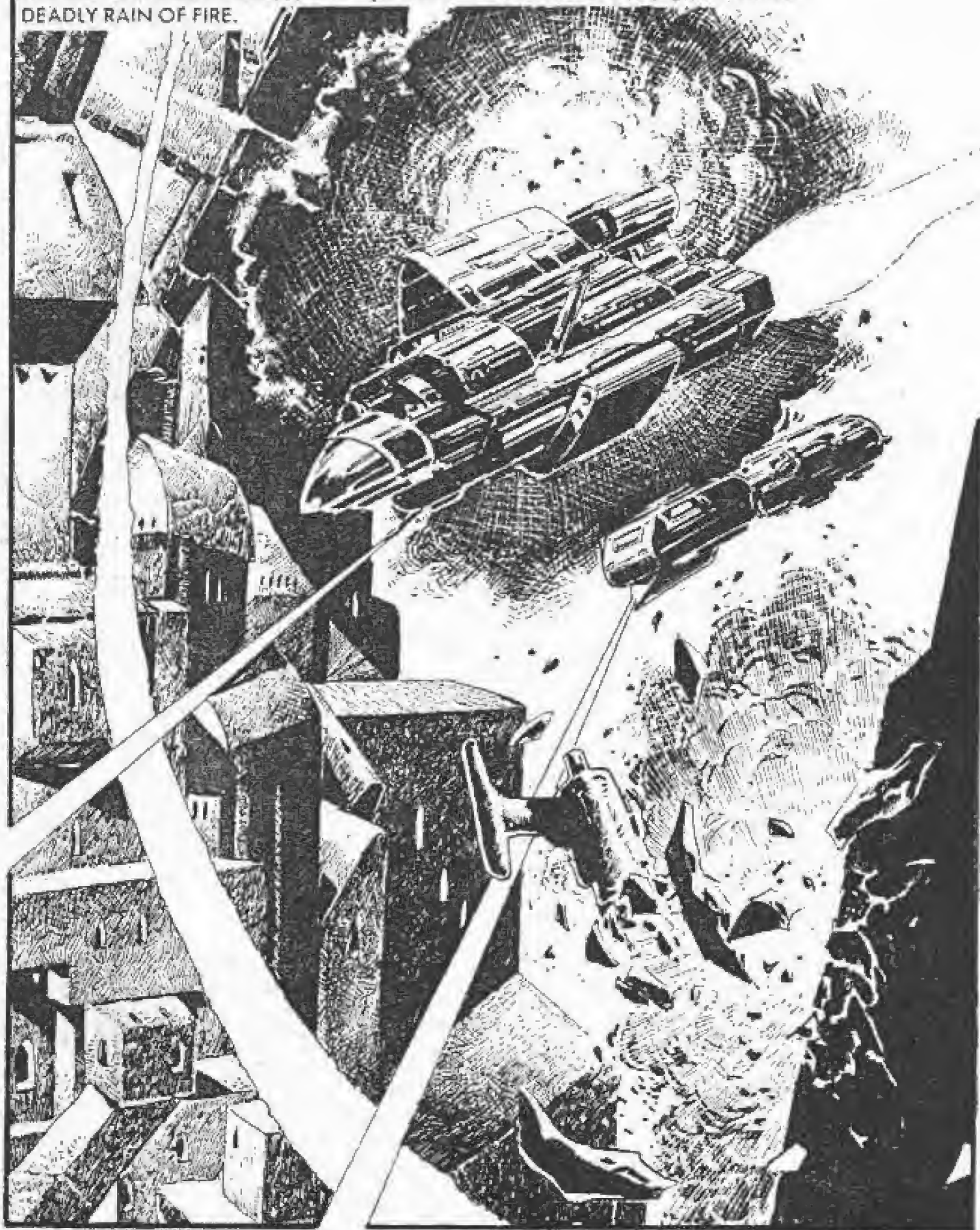
13/e



CARVING UP THE CITY LIKE THIS  
SHOULD GIVE THEM A PROBLEM.

ASUR CLOSING IN—THEY'VE DECIDED  
TO ATTACK DESPITE THEIR ADMIRAL.

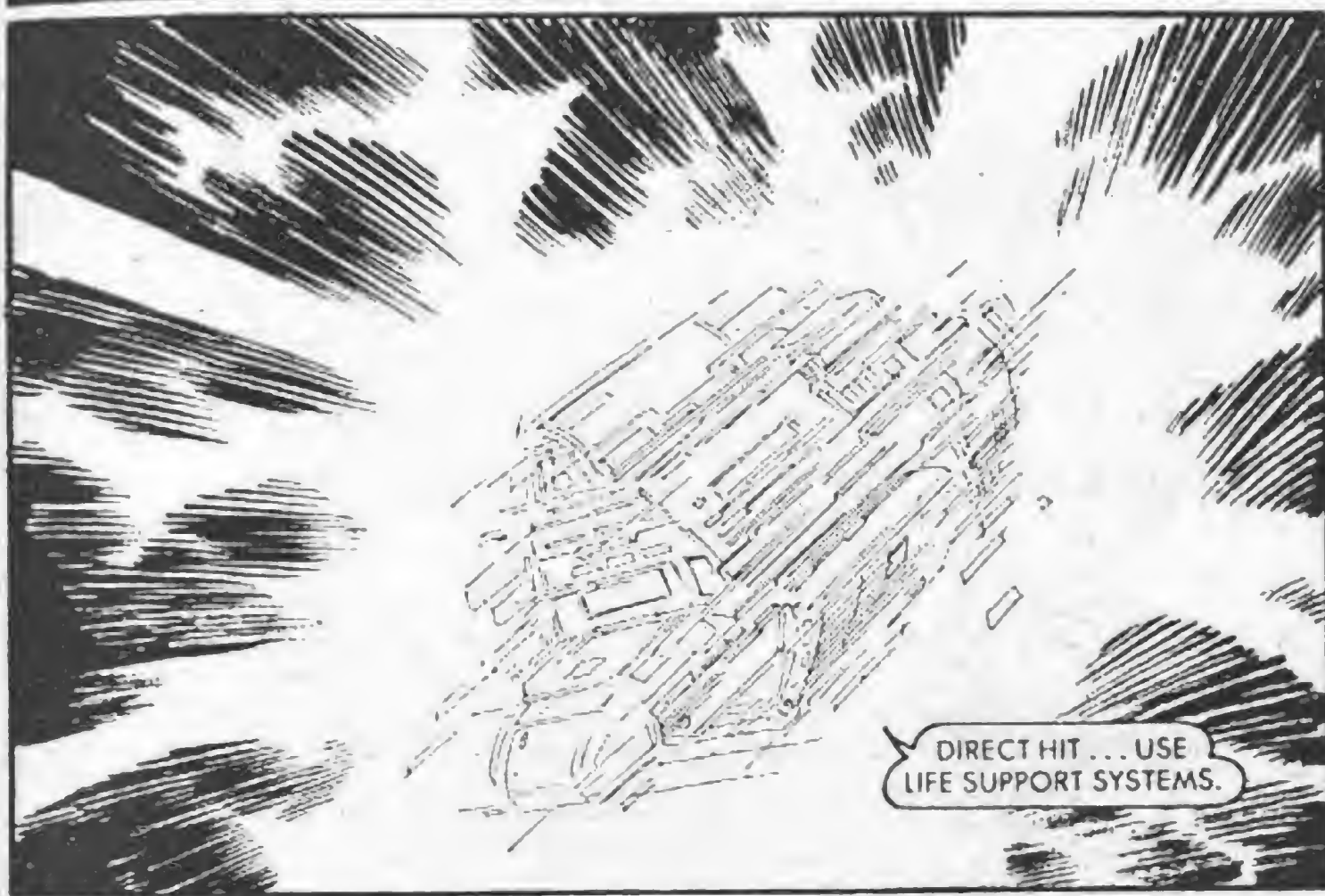
THE CAPTURED ASUR VESSEL AND THE RIGEL EXPRESS SWEEP THE CITY WITH A DEADLY RAIN OF FIRE.



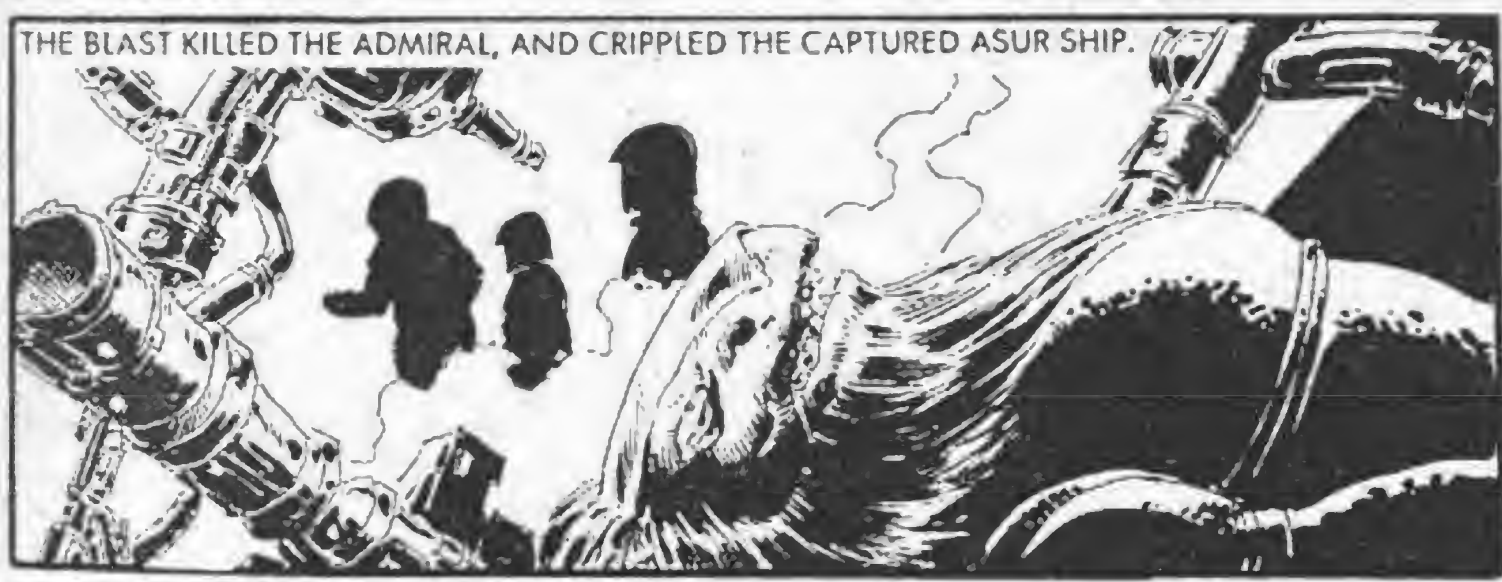




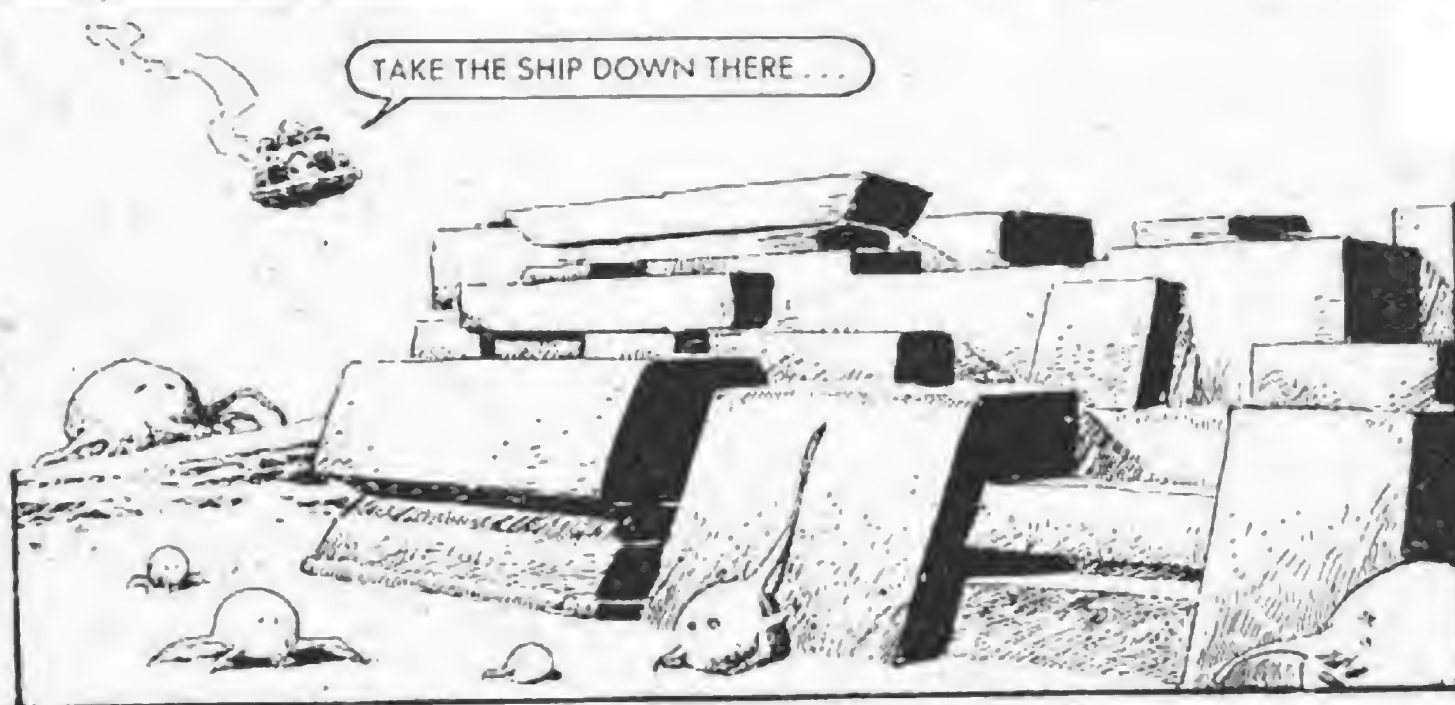
I HIT A FIGHTER. BUT  
THE REST ARE BUNCHING FOR A  
CONCENTRATED ATTACK.



DIRECT HIT ... USE  
LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS.



THE BLAST KILLED THE ADMIRAL, AND CRIPPLED THE CAPTURED ASUR SHIP.





THE DISABLED VESSEL WAS SET DOWN ON THE ROOF OF A LARGE BUILDING.

WE WON'T BE ABLE TO TAKE OFF AGAIN.  
HERE WE STAY AND FIGHT TO THE END.

HERE THEY COME ...  
HIT THEM HARD.







THEY'RE REGROUPING  
FOR ANOTHER ATTACK.

SIX OF US LEFT ... IT'S  
UP TO HENRY NOW.



THIS TIME IT'S THE END. IT'S STRANGE  
THEY DON'T TRY TO PULVERISE US WITH  
GUARDSHIPS OR MISSILES.



AS THE ATTACKERS ADVANCED, THE RIGEL EXPRESS SWOOPED IN.



HENRY HAS SAVED US — BY DISOBEYING  
ORDERS.




WE'LL LAND AND  
PICK YOU UP, STEVE.

NO... YOU'LL BE A SITTING DUCK.  
LEAVE US AND ATTACK THE CITY.

HENRY RETURNED TO THE CITY —




I ENJOYED DOING THAT!




THE DESTABILISER'S DRAINING ALL POWER. WE'RE ALMOST OUT.

STEVE'S SQUAD HAD CUT THEIR WAY INTO THE BUILDING.



I'M INTERESTED TO FIND OUT WHAT'S IN THIS BUILDING. IT'S CURIOUS THAT THE ASUR HAVEN'T USED ANY WEAPON WHICH COULD DAMAGE IT.



SHADES OF DIS! CEASE FIRE!  
WE'VE BEEN SITTING ON AN ARSENAL.



THEN ONE OF THE ASUR CRAFT MADE A BOMBING RUN.

I DON'T LIKE THIS. MY GUESS IS BACTERIA THAT'LL KILL US INSTANTLY.

CLOSE OUR SPACE HELMETS AND HOPE FOR THE BEST — GET INTO VOLTOR AND USE ITS LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM.

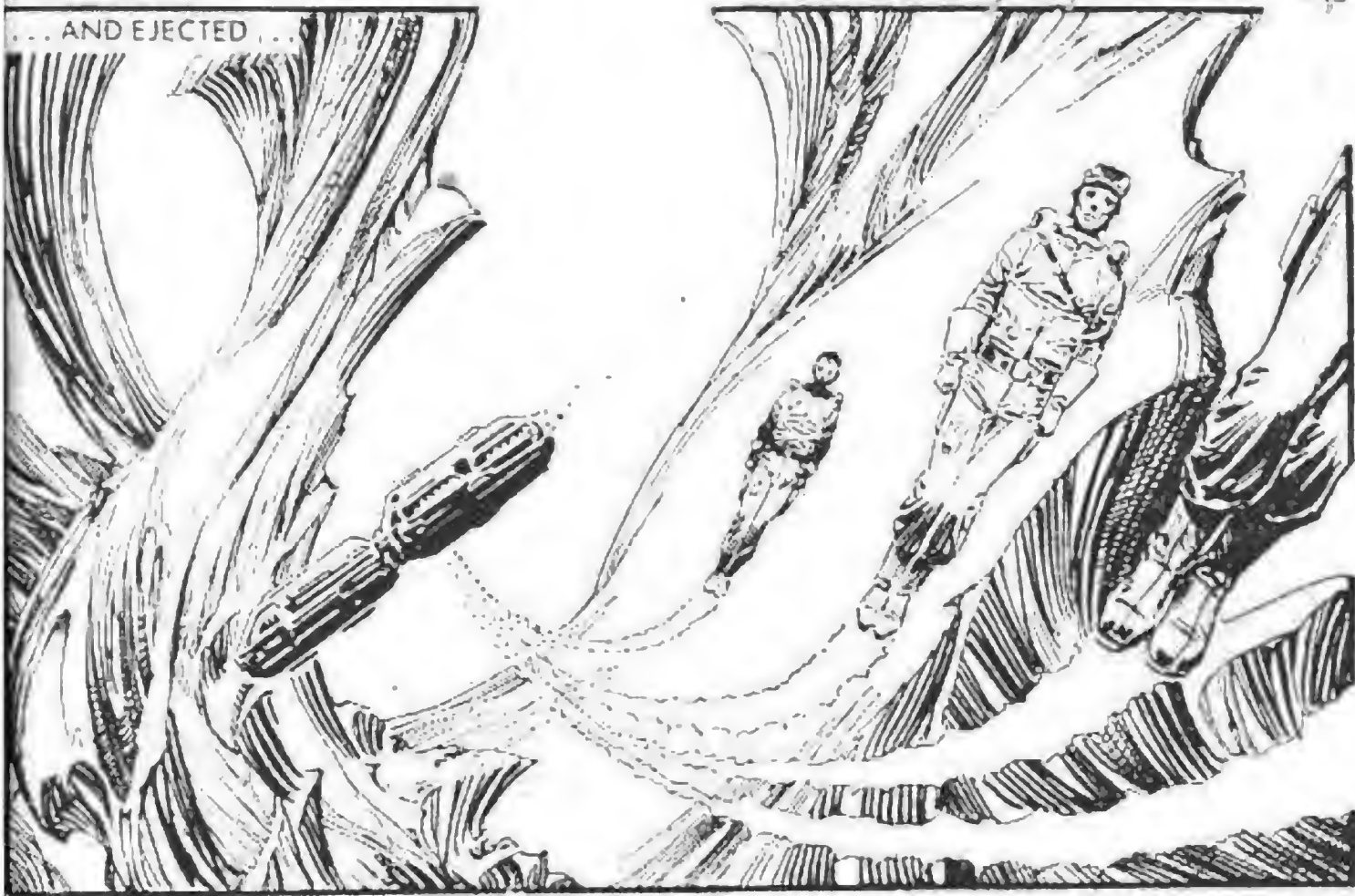
THE ONLY UNPROTECTED PEOPLE WERE THE ARSENAL STAFF.







... AND EJECTED ...



WITH THE LAST TRACES OF ENERGY TRANSFERRED TO THE  
DESTABILISER BEAM, THE RIGEL EXPRESS BROKE THROUGH  
INTO THE CONTROL CENTRE.



THE EXPRESS BLEW UP, PULVERISING THE ASUR CENTRE.



HENRY AND HIS SQUAD HAVING LANDED WERE FIGHTING A DESPERATE BATTLE.

STEVE — THE CONTROL CENTRE IS  
FINISHED — THAT MEANS THEIR  
COMMUNICATIONS ARE NON-EXISTENT.

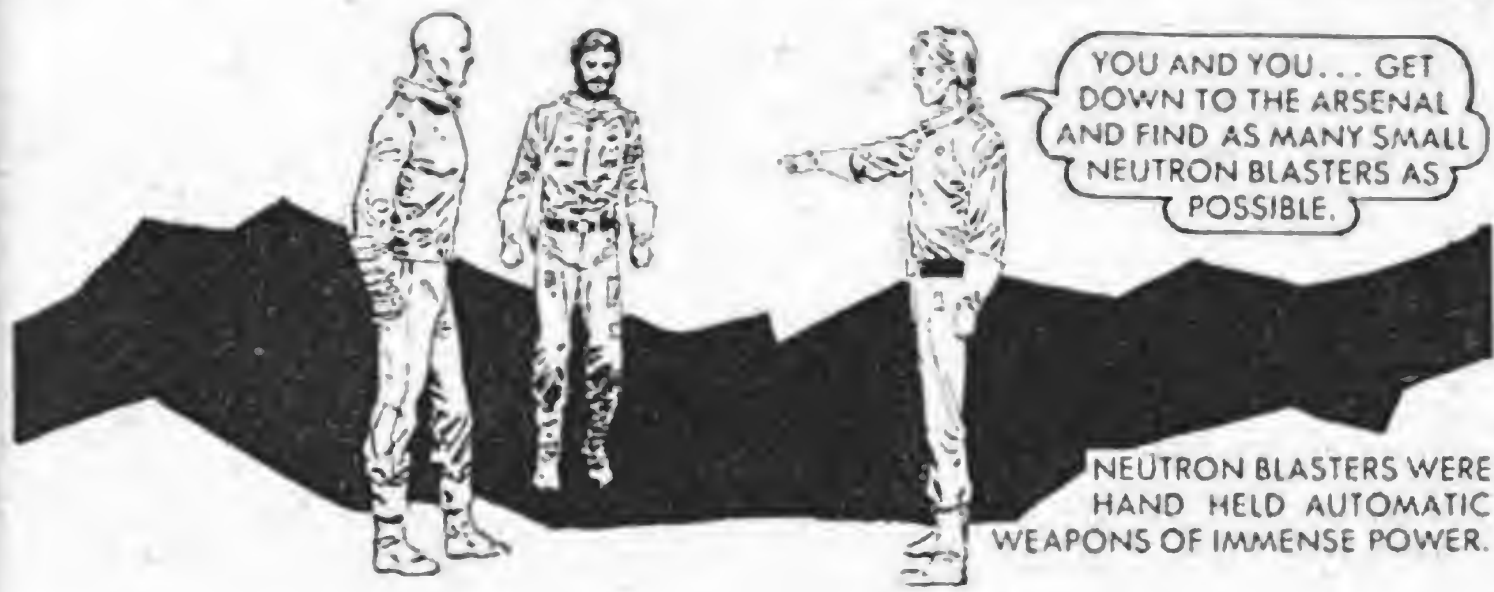






WE COULD CAUSE HAVOC... SWITCH OUR GEAR TO ASUR FREQUENCY — USE A TRANSLATOR PACK AND ISSUE FALSE INSTRUCTIONS.

OUR MAIN DRIVE IS UNOPERATIONAL, BUT SECONDARY DRIVE HAS 20% POWER. THERE'S NOT ENOUGH FOR BLAST OFF — BUT IT COULD GET A SCOUTSHIP AIRBORNE.



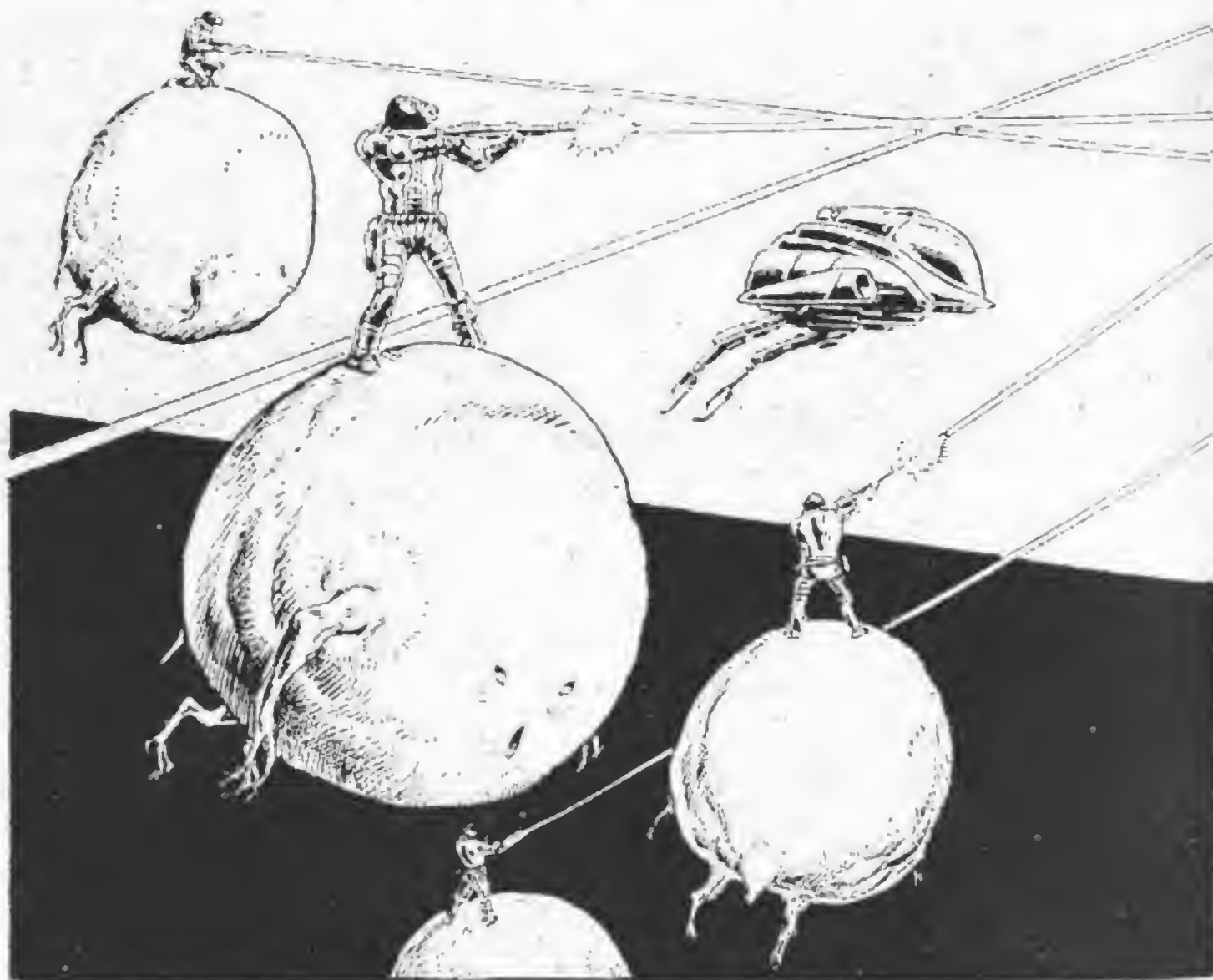
YOU AND YOU... GET DOWN TO THE ARSENAL AND FIND AS MANY SMALL NEUTRON BLASTERS AS POSSIBLE.

NEUTRON BLASTERS WERE HAND HELD AUTOMATIC WEAPONS OF IMMENSE POWER.

WITH THAT DONE—



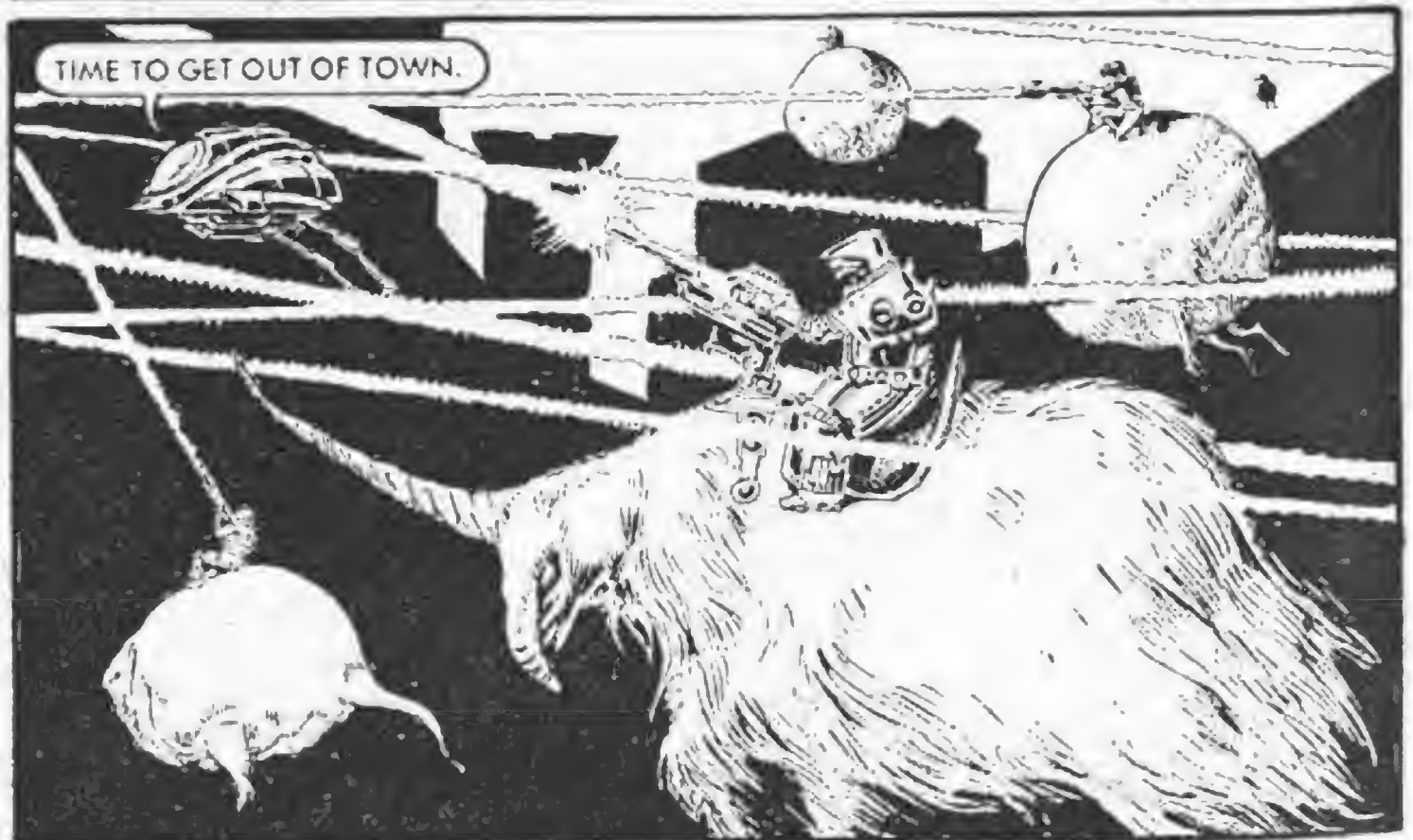
STEVE BLASTED AWAY IN VOLTOR'S SPACEHOPPER—





THEY'RE BOUND TO HIT ME  
SOMETIME ... UNLESS ...



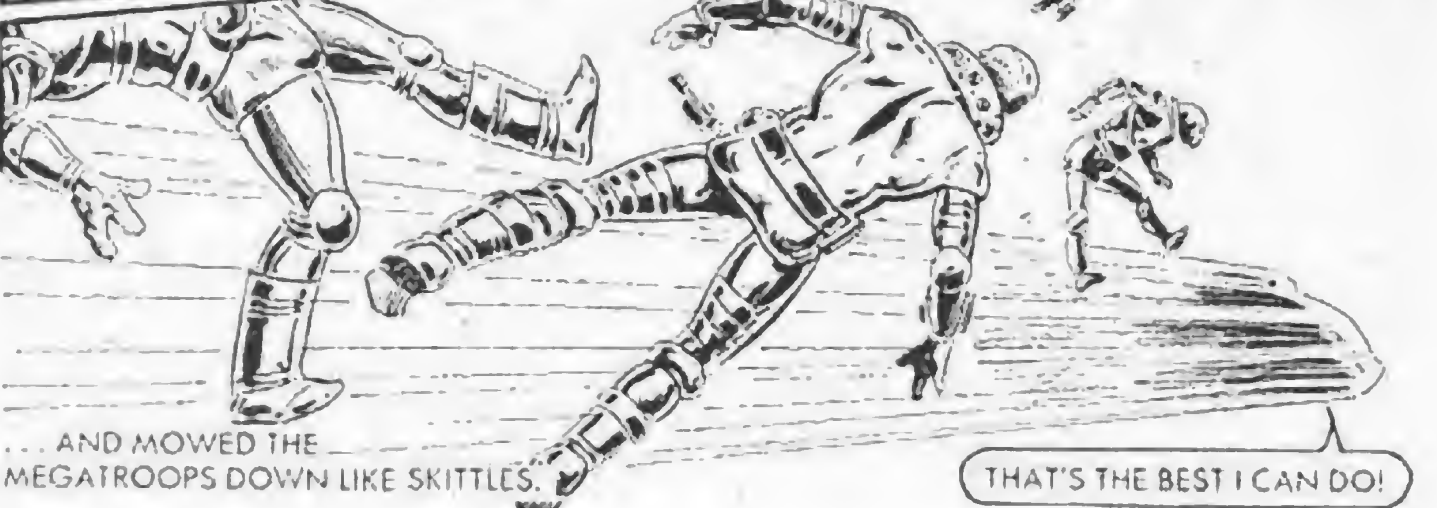







MORE ASUR — AND THEY'LL REACH HENRY  
AND HIS BUNCH BEFORE ME.

STEVE TOOK THE SCOUT TO ZERO FEET, BOUNCED ALONG THE GROUND ...



... AND MOWED THE  
MEGATROOPS DOWN LIKE SKITTLES.

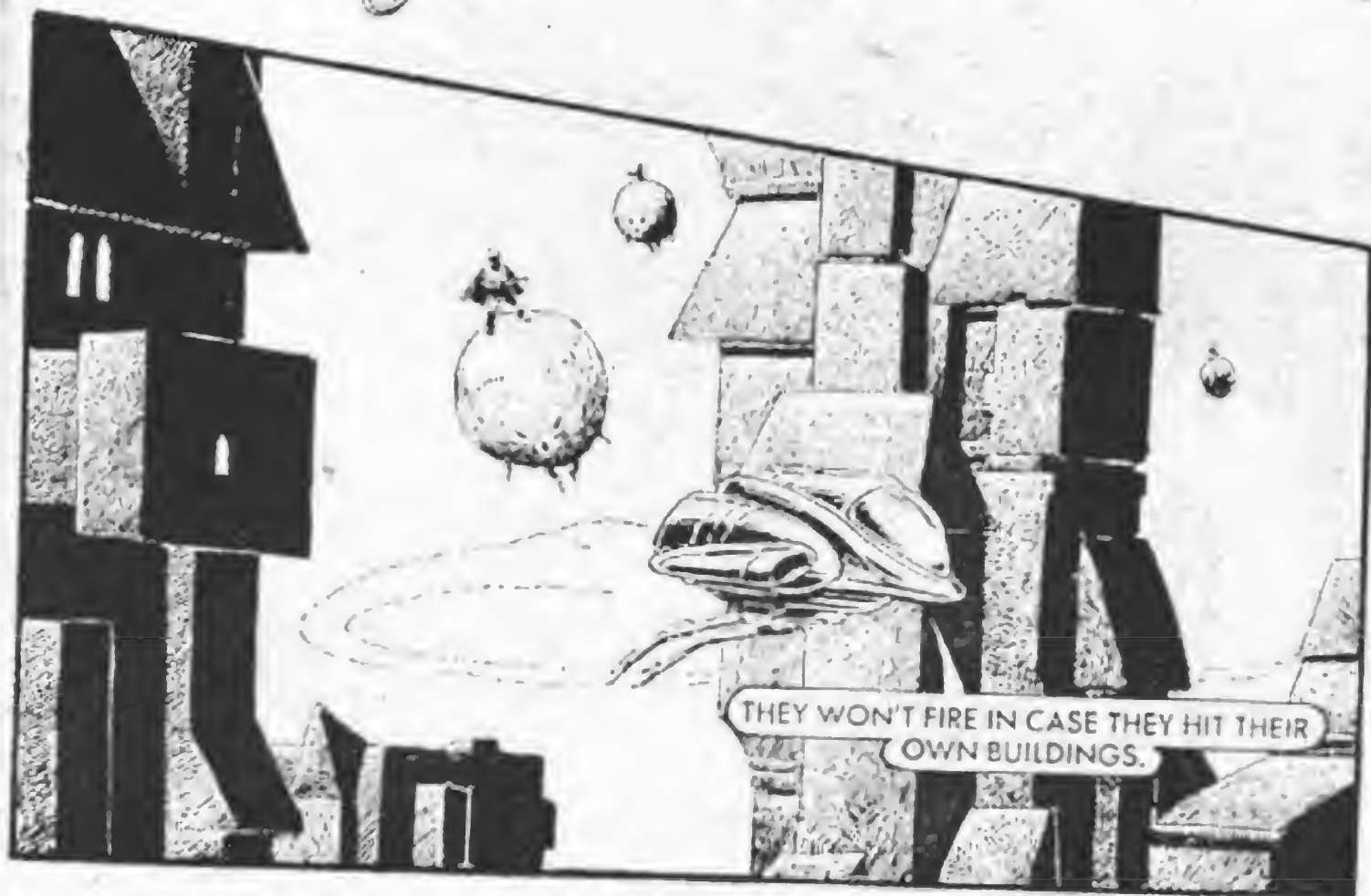
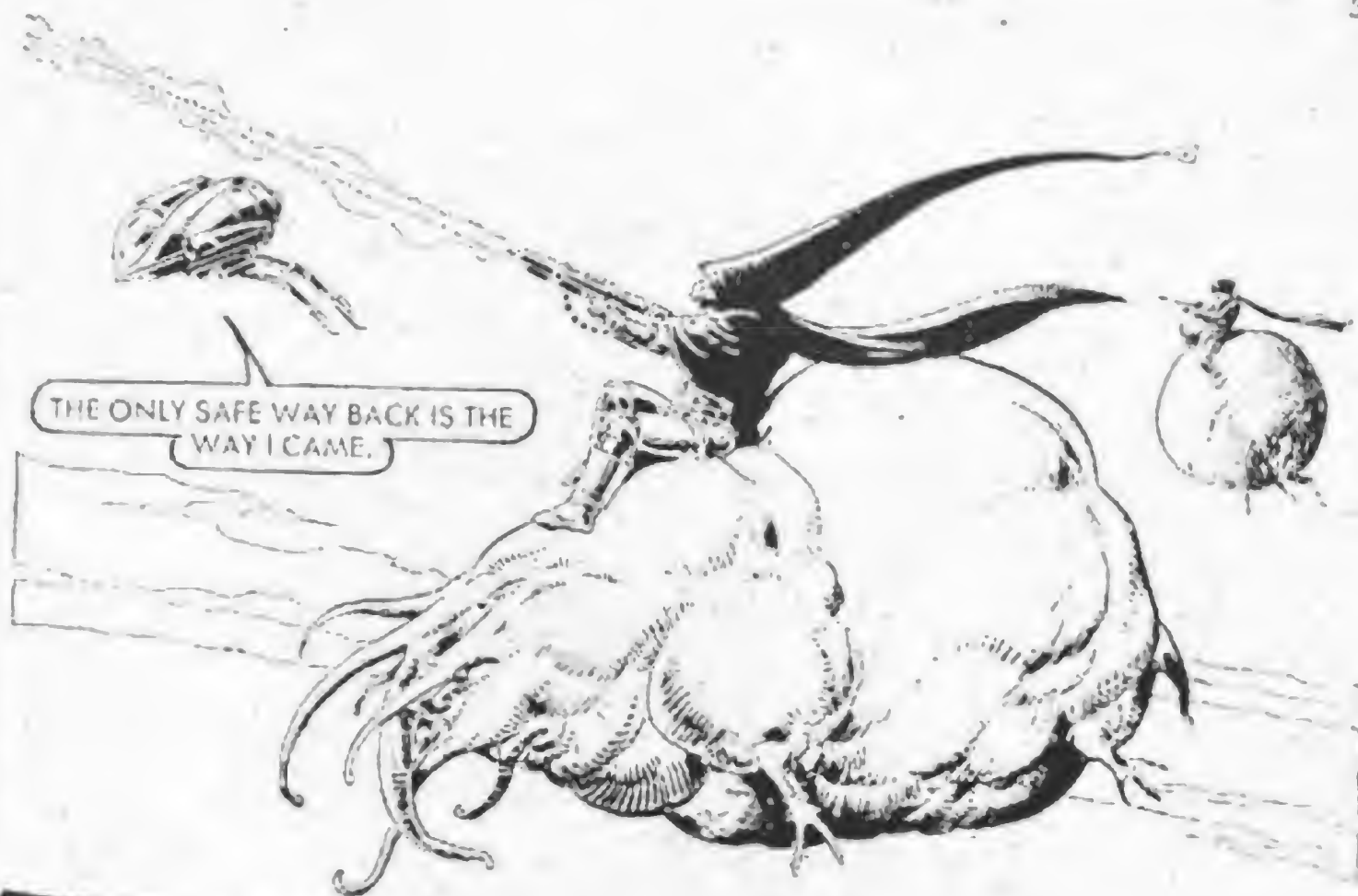
THAT'S THE BEST I CAN DO!

AS THE SCOUT SLID TO A HALT, STEVE OPENED THE PORTS.



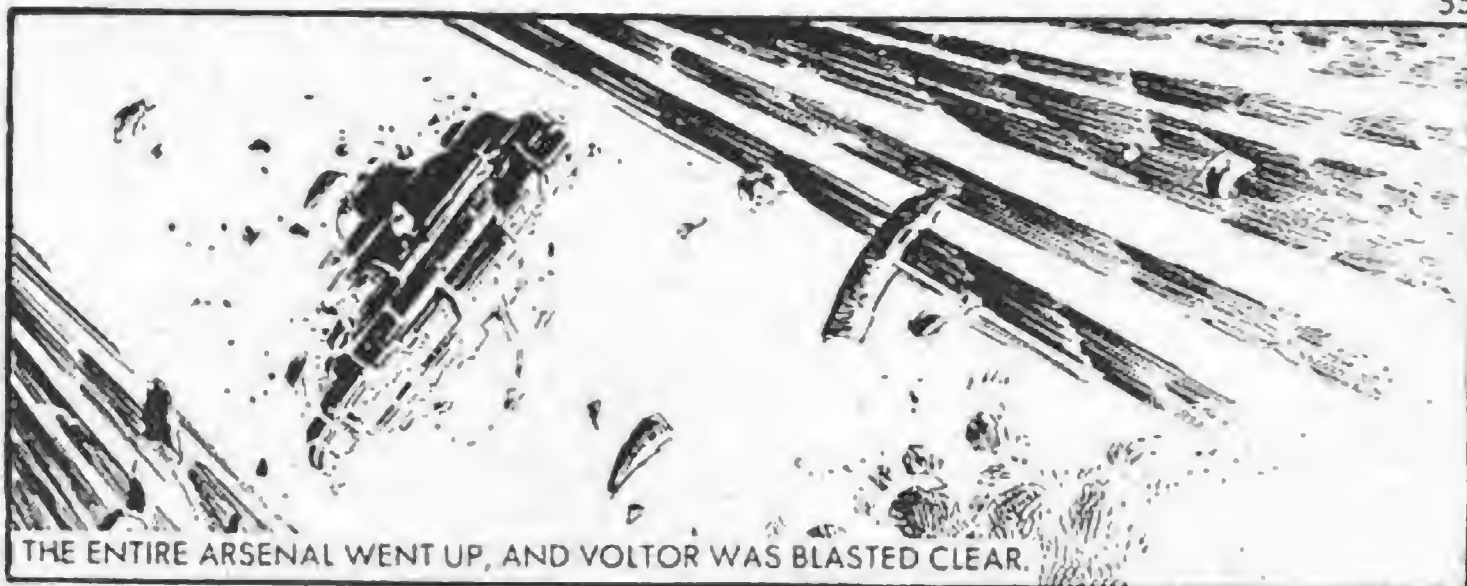
IT TOOK ONLY SECONDS TO TAKE THE SURVIVORS ABOARD.











THE ENTIRE ARSENAL WENT UP, AND VOLTOR WAS BLASTED CLEAR.

THE INTENSE MULTI-ENERGY EXPLOSION SHREDDED VOLTOR'S FORCEFIELD AND STRIPPED THE RADIATION PROOF ALLOY FROM THE HULL.



RADIATION AT DANGER LEVEL. WE'VE  
GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE—OR DIE.

WE CAN'T WALK HOME!

NO... BUT WE CAN HITCH A LIFT.



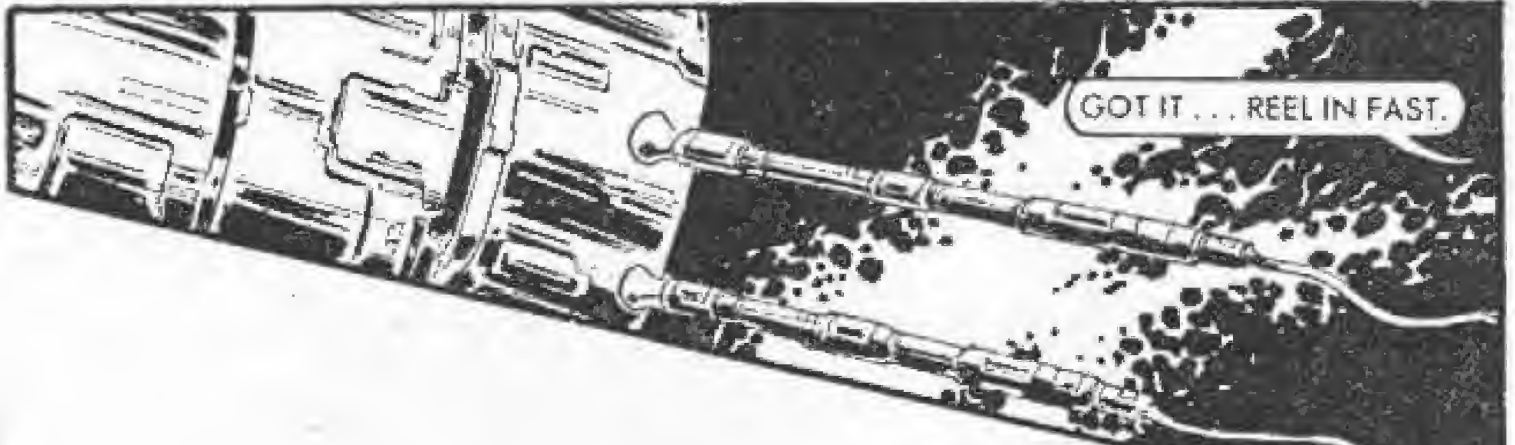






THE LASERPOON HISSSED OUT, ITS HEAT-SEEKING HEAD SEARCHING FOR A SURFACE TO STICK TO.





GOT IT . . . REEL IN FAST.



WE'VE GOT TO GET IN  
BEFORE THEY SPOT US.



WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE  
AIRLOCK TO OPEN, AND HOPE THE  
CREW DON'T SPOT ANYTHING.





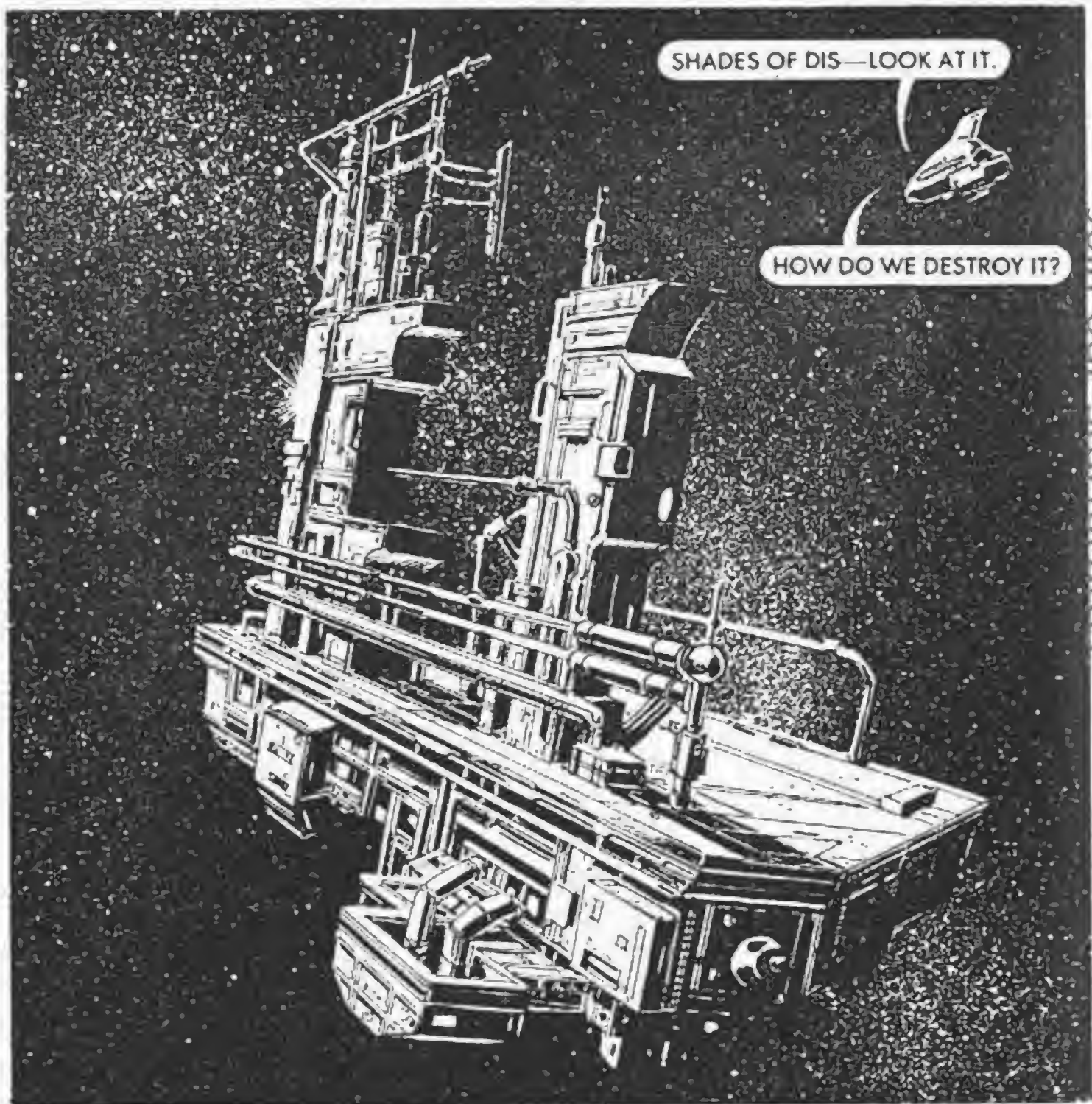
COMPUTER GIVES A 90 PER CENT CHANCE  
OF US PICKING UP A DEPOT SHIP IN  
SECTOR SOL 9 . . . THE MOONS OF PLUTO.


PLUTO IT IS THEN.

THE ASUR INTERCEPTOR WARPED INTO HYPER SPEED AND CROSSED THE FRONTIERS OF TIME.









SEND A DISTRESS, SET ALL  
THE WEAPONRY TO OVER-  
LOAD AND FLY UP ITS  
EXHAUST.

NO... SIR... IF WE  
LEAVE NOW THEY'LL  
RUMBLE US AND WIPE  
OUT THE ONLY CHANCE  
EARTH HAS. WE STAY AND  
TAKE OUR CHANCES.

THE ONLY ANSWER.  
OKAY—THE LOT OF YOU  
—EJECT IN THE PODS  
NOW.

... MALFUNCTION OF MAIN DRIVE.  
REQUEST PERMISSION TO LAND IMMEDIATELY.

GRANTED... USE PAD 71...

LOW OVER ONE  
OF PLUTO'S  
MOONS.

HERE WE GO!







THAT'S THAT ... NOW FOR HOME.

IT'S A LONG WALK.

THERE'S A FARM COLONY ON NEPTUNE  
... THAT'S ONLY 1,000 MILLION MILES  
AWAY ... AT THIS SPEED IT'LL ONLY  
TAKE US FIVE YEARS TO REACH IT ...  
NOBODY IS MONITORING US—WE ARE A  
SUICIDE SQUAD NOT EXPECTED TO  
COME BACK.



BUT EVEN AS THE SUICIDE SQUAD SURVIVORS DRIFTED IN SPACE, AN EARTH SURVEY VESSEL LEFT NEPTUNE TO INVESTIGATE A SUDDEN AND INTENSE EXPLOSION IN THE REGION OF PLUTO. ITS SOPHISTICATED MONITORING EQUIPMENT MISSED NOTHING, AND WITHIN HOURS IT WOULD PICK UP SIGNS OF HUMAN LIFE—A DEATH SQUAD WHO WOULD LIVE TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY.



**DON'T MISS THIS MONTH'S  
OTHER ACTION-PACKED  
ADVENTURE**



**ON SALE  
AT YOUR  
NEWS-  
AGENT'S**

**NOW!**



# STARBLAZERS

IN THE CONQUEST OF SPACE 49

*In March 1978 almost 17 years after the first spaceflights by a Russian and American, a third nation entered the man-in-space race. A Czechoslovakian pilot called Vladimir Remek, was launched by the Russians in Soyuz 28, shown here on the launch pad.*

